

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 0181

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SUBJECT: CONFERENCE ON TERRITORIAL ASYLUM

1. SUMMARY. GOING INTO ITS FOURTH DAY, THE CONFERENCE ON TERRITORIAL ASYLUM STILL HAS NOT COMPLETED ITS ORGANIZATIONAL PHASE, AND THE DECISIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN TAKEN ALL HAVE BEEN CONTENTIOUS ONES. SOMALIA HAS BEEN ELECTED CONFERENCE PRESIDENT, BRAZIL CHAIRMAN OF THE KEY COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, AND THE UAE REPRESENTATIVE CHAIRMAN OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE. SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE STILL HAVE NOT BEEN DETERMINED, EXCEPT THAT IT WILL GREATLY EXCEED IN SIZE THE 15 MEMBERS PROVISIONALLY ENVISAGED. THE EASTERN GROUP DECIDED AT THE OUTSET THAT IT WOULD ASSUME NO PRINCIPAL CONFERENCE OFFICE, AND THE WESTERN GROUP, WHICH CAME DISPOSED TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THIS SUBJECT AREA, NOW FINDS ITSELF IN THE SAME POSITION, END SUMMARY.

2. OPENING PHASE OF THE CONFERENCE ON TERRITORIAL ASYLUM IS CONTINUING INTO ITS FOURTH DAY SERIOUSLY STRAINED BY ORGANIZING DIFFICULTIES WHICH HAVE CAUSED THE PLENARY TO MEET ONLY IN FITS AND STARTS WHILE REGIONAL GROUPS HAVE ATTEMPTED TO COMMUNICATE WITH ONE ANOTHER THROUGH MEETINGS OF SPOKESMEN. ANTI-WESTERN BIAS OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONFERENCE, RYBAKOV, WHO
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CHAIRS THESE MEETINGS HAS GREATLY COMPLICATED WEO EFFORTS TO OBTAIN AN EQUITABLE BALANCE IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF PRINCIPAL OFFICES AND SUITABLE STRUCTURE IN SUCH OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS AS THE SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE. LATE ARRIVAL OF LEGAL ADVISOR SUY LEFT RYBAKOV WITH A FREER HAND THAN DESIRABLE. REGISTERING THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CONFERENCE AT THE OUTSET THE SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN DELE-

GATIONS ANNOUNCED THEY WOULD NOT WISH TO FILL ANY PRINCIPAL CONFERENCE OFFICE, AND THEREUPON SUPPORTED CANDIDACIES MOST LIKELY TO DE-STRUCTURE THE CONFERENCE.

3. AGREEMENTS TEDIOUSLY REACHED IN SPOKESMEN'S MEETINGS HAVE PROVEN FRAGILE. AN UNDERSTANDING WAS REACHED THAT WEO SUPPORT FOR ELECTION OF SOMALIAN PERMREP OSMAN TO CONFERENCE PRESIDENCY BY ACCLAMATION WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY ELECTION OF AUSTRIAN PERMREP NETTEL SIMILARLY TO CHAIRMANSHIP OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (THE SINGLE POSITION CLAIMED BY WEO). THIS UNDERSTANDING DISSOLVED IMMEDIATELY AFTER OSMAN'S ELECTION, HOWEVER, AND PLENARY HAD TO BE SUSPENDED FOR FURTHER PROTRACTED CONSULTATIONS.

4. NASCIEMENTO Y SILVA (BRAZIL) LAUNCHED A VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN FOR THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, WHICH INCLUDED AN INITIATIVE BY BOLIVIA (LATER WITHDRAWN) TO SUSPEND THE SECRET BALLOT PROVISION. HIS APPEAL FOR LDC SOLIDARITY APPARENTLY LINED UP AFRICAN SUPPORT, AND FURTHER EFFORTS TO AGREE THROUGH CONSULTATIONS ON A COMPREHENSIVE SCHEME FOR DISTRIBUTION OF OFFICES PROVED FUTILE. PRESSED TO A VOTE LATE ON THE THIRD DAY, NASCIEMENTO Y SILVA WAS ELECTED 46-36 OVER NETTEL. PLENARY THEN WENT ON TO ELECT BY ACCLAMATION YASEEN (IRAQI NATIONAL REPRESENTING UAE) TO CHAIR THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE.

5. FIRM RULES OF PROCEDURE STILL HAVE NOT BEEN ADOPTED BECAUSE OF CONTINUING DISPUTE, MAINLY OVER THE SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE BUT LATENTLY ALSO OVER THE QUESTION OF CONFIDENTIAL

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PROVIDING FOR PARTICIPATION BY NGO'S. ANY POSSIBILITY OF HOLDING THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE TO 15, AS ENVISAGED IN THE DRAFT RULES OF PROCEDURE, WAS LOST AT THE OUTSET DURING SPOKESMEN'S CONSULTATIONS WHEN THE AFRO-ASIANS INSISTED UPON EXPANSION. ONCE, AGAIN, THE AGREEMENT FINALLY MANAGED AMONG SPOKESMEN TO ENLARGE THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE TO 31 WITH 8 SEATS TO WEO CAME APART IN PLENARY WHEN TANZANIA OBJECTED TO THE TRADE-OFF REACHED ON COMPOSITION AND THE AFRICAN SPOKESMAN (GHANA) THEREUPON DISSOCIATED HIMSELF AND THE AFRICANS FROM THE AGREEMENT. THIS ISSUE REMAINS OPEN. MEANWHILE, EASTERN EUROPEANS ARE WORKING TO DELAY CONSIDERATION OF PROVIDING IN THE RULES FOR PARTICIPATION BY NGO'S.

6. EVEN THE FAIRLY RITUALISTIC ELECTION OF 22 VICE PRESIDENTS WAS FLAWED BY A LAST-MINUTE CONFLICT AMONG AFRICANS WHICH HAD TO BE RESOLVED IN PLENARY BY GHANA WITHDRAWING IN FAVOR OF IVORY COAST. WITH THIS NOW SETTLED, THE GENERAL (STEERING) COMMITTEE FINALLY HAS BEEN COMPOSED, AND WILL MEET ON THE MORNING OF THE FOURTH DAY, JANUARY 13, TO BEGIN ORGANIZING THE

WORK OF THE CONFERENCE.

7. THE FIRST SUBSTANTIVE MATTER TO BE FACED PROBABLY WILL BE THE IMPORTANT QUESTION OF DECIDING WHICH, IF ANY, BASIC TEXT THE CONFERENCE SHOULD PROCEED FROM. (THERE ARE THE TEXT PREPARED AT THE BELLAGIO CONFERENCE, THE TEXT SUBSEQUENTLY DEVELOPED FROM THE WORK OF THE UN GROUP OF EXPERTS, AND A THIRD TEXT WHICH HAS BEEN INTRODUCED BY THE FRG.) RYBAKOV SET THE STAGE FOR DIFFICULTY BY ARGUING STRENUOUSLY IN THE OPENING MEETING OF SPOKESMEN THAT THERE IS NO TEXT BEFORE THE CONFERENCE AND NO NEED FOR THERE TO BE ONE. THE QUESTION HAD BEEN RAISED IN THE MEETING BY THE WEO SPOKESMAN, AND IT PROBABLY AUGERS BADLY FOR THIS ISSUE, IF NOT FOR THE QUALITY OF THE CONFERENCE AS A WHOLE, THAT NO OTHER REGIONAL GROUP HAD EVEN CONSIDERED THE QUESTION. (WE MAY ASSUME, HOWEVER, THAT THE EASTERN GROUP HAD CONSIDERED CAREFULLY THE TACTICAL ASPECTS OF IT.)

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8. NOW THAT ELECTION QUESTIONS ARE OUT OF THE WAY, WEO SOLIDARITY MAY BECOME STRAINED BY COMPETITION FOR SEATS ON THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE. WITH TANZANIA PURSUING ITS CHALLENGE TO THE SPOKESMEN'S AGREEMENT, ARGUING FOR "FAIR GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION," EVEN THE EIGHT SEATS ALLOCATED TO WEO MAY DIMINISH. MEANWHILE, TURKEY BELATEDLY ENTERED ITS CANDIDACY WITHIN WEO, BRINGING THE NUMBER OF WEO CANDIDATES TO NINE, AND HAS THREATENED TO CARRY ITS BID INTO PLENARY. TO ADD TO THIS, ISRAEL, WHICH HAS MANGED SUCCESSFULLY TO MAINTAIN ITS PLACE IN THE GROUP (GENEVA 0152) DESPITE THE UNEASINESS ABOUT THIS WHICH SOME WESTERN EUROPEANS PRIVATELY HAVE EXPRESSED, ASSERTED A STRONG INTEREST IN BEING PUT FORWARD AS A WEO CANDIDATE. (ISRAEL HAS NOT APPROACHED US ABOUT THIS, AND WE HAVE NOT REACTED TO THE INDUCEMENTS OF THE WEO CHAIRMAN TO INVOLVE US.)

9. COMMENT. SELDOM HAVE WE SEEN A DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE OPEN UNDER SUCH ILL OMENS, OR WITH SO LITTLE (OR SUCH FAULTY) SECRETARIAT GUIDANCE. CLEARLY, AND NOT SUPRISINGLY, THE EASTERN GROUP HAS DECIDED TO PLAY A NEGATIVE ROLE IN THIS CONFERENCE AND OBSTRUCT ITS OBJECTIVES, AND THIS HAS ABETTED GENEVA REPRESENTATIVES OF AFRO-ASIAN STATES IN THEIR PURSUIT OF SYMBOLIC OBJECTIVES WITH SLIGHT REGARD TO THE PURPOSES OF THE CONFERENCE. WHILE THIS PATTERN IS NOT IN ITSELF NOVEL, ITS MANIFESTATION IN THIS CONFERENCE IS EXTREME AND, WE ANTICIPATE, ITS INFLUENCE ON THE QUALITY OF THE CONFERENCE MAY BE COMMENSURATE. THE EASTERN STATES DECIDED AS A MATTER OF POLICY TO SIT ON THE SIDELINES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CONFERENCE; AS A RESULT OF THE FAIRLY RAW POLITICS WHICH HAVE DOMINATED THE ORGANIZING OF IT, THE WESTERN STATES FIND THEM-

SELVES SIMILARLY PLACED.

10. THE FAULT FOR WESTERN INEPTITUDE MUST BE SHARED BY THE
WESTERN CAUCUS IN GENERAL AND THE CHAIRMAN, AMB
AMLIE, IN PARTICULAR. THE GROUP PROVED RELUCTANT TO POLITIC
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AND EAGER TO FADE AWAY AT KEY JUNCTURES. AMLIE GAVE AWAY
THE CONVENTION PRESIDENCY AND, THINKING HIS FLANK WAS SECURE,
TURNED DOWN A BRAZILIAN DEMARCHE BECAUSE IT WOULD BE A
"BETRAYAL" OF HIS ASIAN AND AFRICAN ALLIES. IN THE END, HE
WAS SNOOKERED AND THE WEST EMERGED DRESSED IN A BARREL. (AN
EXCPETION TO WESTERN FLACIDITY HAS BEEN THE NEW CANADIAN AMB,
HARRY JAY.) CATTO

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